

Purple Logic

by whiteraven1606

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Summary: When Dean and his four year old self switch places everything gets twisted up. Sam doesn't know what to do with a little kid since he refuses to talk. Meanwhile in the past Dean is trying to avoid his father's search for missing kid him. Then there's Castiel and an Irish goddess the size of a kid in a Dukes of Hazzard t-shirt. All Bobby can think is: Idjits, the whole bunch.

Purple Logic

Dean snorted as he came awake. He bolted upright and felt around for Sammy. Blinking in the dark, Dean pulled his underpants' waistband away from himself because it was too big. He wiggled it. Way too big.

Feeling his way to the edge of the bed, Dean felt for a lamp. Finding one, he flicked the switch and stared at down at himself in the new light. His underpants were huge. He glanced up at the snort from the next bed over. The person was covered in the blanket of the bed, but he didn't seem big enough to be Dad.

Dean slipped down the edge of his bed to the floor and held the underpants up with one hand. He peered at the man on the bed and tried to place him. Dad hadn't been talking to anyone but the nice lady that said Dean didn't have to talk if he wasn't ready. Dean didn't know that he'd ever be ready again. He missed Mom and Sammy was fussy a lot now.

He looked around again for Sammy, but came up empty. Starting to worry, Dean padded to the bathroom, but found none of Sammy's bottles or extra diapers.

Moving to the bag on the floor, Dean found one of Dad's knives at the top. Dean remembered when Dad had brought it into the nice lady's house and how she'd been sad about it. It had gleamed all new and shiny. Dad had said it was uniq...different than everything else.

This was the same knife, he was sure, but this one was worn and nicked on the handle.

Licking his lip, Dean moved back to the beds and looked for the phone. He could call...No, no, he couldn't. He only knew the numbers for home. And home had burned with Mommy.

Dean bit his lip as he hiked the underpants higher. He was getting cold and he wanted Sammy. And Dad. He caught sight of a ring on the bed he'd been on. Dean went on tip-toe to reach it and pull it to him. It was pretty, like the necklace that hung from his neck.

He squinted at the clock. Maybe Dad was just out with Sammy for shots. Dean remembered he'd had to stay home last time. The numbers of the clock had a five in them. Five was the start of cartoons. Cartoons fixed lots of things. Maybe they'd fix this too.

He padded over to the TV and looked carefully at the buttons. The big one was usually the power so he pushed it. It didn't click as loud as normal buttons, but the TV flipped on.

The man on the bed yelped and sat up. "Dean!"

Dean froze. He turned his head and looked at the man staring at him. He punched the big button again without looking and the TV's noise disappeared.

"Oh, shit." The man rubbed his eyes. "Dean?" He blinked. "Holy sh..."

Dean blinked at him and inched closer. The man had on a shirt and underpants lots like the ones trying to fall off Dean's hips. He patted the corner of the man's bed.

"Uhm. Okay." The man threw back the covers and Dean startled away from the sudden movement. "Whoa, sorry. Sorry." The man showed his hands all empty and big. "I didn't mean to scare you. I'm Sam."

Dean tilted his head and moved closer. Sammy was little and noisy. This couldn't be Sammy, but he had Sammy's name. He looked down at his underpants and back up at the huge Sam. Dad's knife was too old. Oh, what if I time traveled like in the comics? He moved closer and Sam just watched him as he pushed the sheet out of the way and pulled up the outside of the left leg of the underpants.

He stared at the scar. It'd had been Dad's fault when he'd first tried to cut Sammy's fingernails and Sammy had cut his thigh with his ragged nail. Dean remembered how Mommy had laughed even though she'd been sort of mad too. There it was, a little curved scar just like Sammy's. He looked up at Sam's face.

"Umm, I don't remember where I got that one, sorry."

Sammy wouldn't remember because he was too small. Too small for football, too small to run from the fire that burned their home. Dean took a deep breath like the nice lady said to do and promptly landed on the floor. He didn't want to cry, but Sammy was supposed to be littler than him, not huge.

"Hey." Sam slipped down to crouch by him. "It's okay. I'll make it alright again. Okay, Dean?"

Dean just nodded because he didn't know what else to do. He turned and grabbed Sam and pulled himself into Sam's warmth. Dean started to cry when Sam still felt like Sammy when he closed his eyes.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam gathered Dean closer and slid backwards to sit on his butt. "I'm sorry, Dean. I don't know what's happened, but we'll fix it." His brother was tiny and clammy to the touch. Sam worried that he was in shock, which seemed like it would be reasonable.</p>

Lifting Dean up onto his bed, Sam wrapped his blanket around Dean's thin shoulders. He watched Dean duck his head and hiccup, his little hand still wrapped in the waistband of his underwear.

"It's alright to cry. I know this is probably really scary." He settled on the edge of Dean's bed and leaned down to get eye level with the boy. "Can you tell me the last thing you remember?"

Dean wrinkled his nose and shook his head.

Sam wasn't sure if that meant he didn't remember or wasn't going to talk. "Well, okay." He grabbed the TV remote. "Here, find some cartoons and I'm going to make a call, alright?" He held out the remote, but Dean just stared at it and then up at him like he was crazy. Sam thought about it for a moment. "Dean, how old are you?"

Dean beamed as he held up four fingers.

Sam reflexively smiled back. "That's great." Sam grabbed up the cellphone, flipped the TV to the on, found the Cartoon Network, and slipped into the bathroom. He leaned his forehead against the door. "Oh, that's just great."

He flipped open the phone and stared at the contacts' list. He didn't have the faintest idea who to call. Or what could have caused this. Dean hadn't been thrown around by anything in over a week. They'd not even started their newest job. Sam blew out a breath. He couldn't panic. He had to think this through.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean watched the bathroom door click shut and then turned to the TV. The cartoons weren't ones he'd seen before. The little girls flew off the screen and then they started fighting. It was weird. Dean eased down off the bed and pulled the underpants back up. He stopped at the crack of the door and listened, but Sam wasn't making any noise.</p>

Turning, Dean went across the room to the little table and looked at all the things laid out. The books were worn and old. Mommy had books. He missed his own that had gone with Mommy. Dad was too sad to get him new ones and it wasn't something Sammy needed yet.

The bathroom door opened and Dean whorled around to make sure it was Sam. He peered over the top of the bed as Sam glanced at the TV and

then around the room for him.

"Dean." Sam found him and came over to sit on the closer edge of the bed. "I, umm...Look I'm sorry, but I can't take you to Dad, okay? We'll go to a friend's place instead."

He didn't really want Dad now. It wouldn't be Dad if Sam wasn't Sammy. He looked down at the big underpants and back up at Sam.

"Yeah, you need clothes." Sam rubbed his hand across his knees. "There's a Walmart Supercenter near here, but it's a little dangerous if I take you in with me. They might think I stole you."

He wrapped his hand around one of Sam's giant fingers and held on.

"Okay, yeah, I don't blame you at all." Sam stood and Dean let go. "We'll put you in a shirt and pretend you don't feel good. And I'll make like I have no idea what I'm doing." Sam rummaged in a bag on the dresser. "Which I don't."

Dean held up his arms and let Sam fumble the shirt onto him. He was horrible at it, but then so was Dad when it came to Dean's clothes. Dad was pretty good at Sammy's, but not near as good as Dean was.

Sam tugged on the underpants that Dean still held to his waist. "Let them drop. We'll get you proper ones for you, okay?"

Nodding, Dean dropped them and let the shirt fall down past his knees. He looked down at his bare feet and back up to Sam.

"Come on." Sam scooped him up and Dean grabbed for a firm hold on Sam's collar. They left the little room behind and headed for a shiny black car that looked just like Dad's car. Dean leaned towards it as Sam unlocked the door. "Hey, no fingerprints. Your adult self would have a fit."

Dean gaped at Sam and then at the car.

"Yes, Dean. It's your car, but right now I'm driving."

Smiling, Dean crawled into the middle. and peered over the seat into the back where he should be. Sam glanced back there and then down at him.

"I know, but I don't have a car seat and it's five blocks." He frowned as he started the car. "We'll have to see about a car seat." Sam looked down at him. "Do you know how much you weigh?"

Dean thought about it. He'd seen numbers on the scale when they'd had him stand still to weigh him last time he'd gotten shots. He looked around for a crayon.

"Oh." Sam smiled and found him paper and a pencil. "Here."

Carefully wrapping his hand around the pencil just like Mommy had shown him many times, Dean wrote out the numbers he remembered. He huffed when he was done. They weren't straight or the same size. He

hated that.

Sam seemed to like it though. "That's great, Dean. Thank you."

Dean glanced up to make sure that Sam meant it. He smiled back when Sam smiled.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam figured he was totally screwed when a worker approached them in the clothing section. He'd been just standing and staring at the sea of clothes. There was just so much <em>stuff</em>.

"Can I help you?"

He shifted Dean a little higher on his hip. "Ah, yeah. I know this looks crazy, but..."

She smiled and cocked her head at Dean. "Hey, little man. You don't seem scared and your adult is silly enough to have stood still for a security camera to get a great picture, so I'm going to assume you are related?"

Dean nodded and patted Sam's shoulder.

"He's my brother. Our Mom, uh..." Sam looked at Dean out of the corner of his eye and then back at the worker. "Umm."

She grimaced. "Ah." Leaning forward, she looked at Dean. "Okay, honey, how about we start with undies? My name is Lisa. What's yours?"

Dean bashed his forehead into Sam's chest as he tried to hide.

"Ow." Sam hitched Dean up and back to better settle him. "I'm Sam. He's Dean."

Lisa nodded and headed off. Sam trailed behind.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean stood still as the lady held a pair of pants up to his backside. She'd found him underpants with the new cartoon Thundercats on them. She'd torn open the package and let him put a set on right then. It'd been great. Which was why Dean was willing to put up with her moving him around as she held up clothes to his body.</p>

"These will be good. He'll grow taller before he fills out at his age. So we'll just roll the legs up for a while, huh, Dean?"

He nodded because that's what she was wanting him to do. He stepped into the soft pants she held out for him and grinned when he found Big Bird on the knees when she pulled them up. He pointed them out to Sam, who smiled.

"I see them. You like those?"

Dean nodded harder that time because he really liked watching Big Bird when he walked. He let himself be turned again and blinked. There was a black thing in the bin across from them. As Sam and Lisa

talked about the soft shirt that went with the pants, Dean moved over to the bin. There was a black dragon in there. Dean patted it to make sure it wasn't going to move. It was really soft. He pulled on one leg and it slipped out of the bin onto his feet.

"Oh. You found Toothless." Lisa knelt beside him and turned the dragon over so the wings were upright. "Have you seen the movie?"

Dean frowned and turned to look at Sam.

"Ah. No, Mom liked showing him old movies." Sam took the dragon from Lisa. "We'll have to get it too, while we're here."

Lisa smiled at them so Dean smiled back. He let them jam shoes on his feet because he got to hold the dragon while they did. He still didn't see the point of shoes.

Dean held his arms up for Sam to pick him up. He didn't want to walk in the clompy shoes and he didn't want to drag the dragon on the floor. Lisa pulled on the cart she'd gotten them and the seat popped into place.

Sam lifted him and sat him in the seat correctly only because Dean was quick to put his feet where they had to go. He'd have to remember Sam was as bad as Dad about seats. Dean accepted the dragon when it was offered and nestled his head down on it as the cart started to move.

He watched the store go by until he saw the books. He bolted upright and pointed that direction.

"You want a book?"

Dean nodded and bounced, which made the whole cart dance. Sam wrapped his arm around Dean's back and turned the cart. Sam lifted him out and Dean yanked his feet up to make sure they didn't bang on the cart handle. Sam was really bad at seats.

Dean looked back to make sure the dragon was waiting in the cart and then turned to find his lost books. Mommy had said they'd get a new Moon book when Sammy had drooled all over his and they had, but these books were all weird and big.

He walked along them until he saw the Whos. He knew those books, but he didn't want them unless there wasn't anything else. They bothered Dad now that Mommy wasn't there to read them. He saw a little purple sticking out from behind the Cat book with the red and white. He tugged and smiled down at the purple boy. Harold.

Dean held the book out to Sam to see. Dean knew he wanted to read it to Sammy once he could read everything. He knew the letters and the color name for purple. And that it was Harold.

"Harold and the Purple Crayon." Sam looked down at him. "You see anything else you want?"

Dean blinked. More than one meant he'd been a really good boy, but he'd not done anything. He turned back to the books. Maybe Sam didn't know he should only get one. Dean decided he wasn't going to tell him

if it meant more books.

He looked at the bewildering array of books until he saw a little golden strip. He reached for that and when he couldn't get it Sam handed it to him. He knew this one. It was like Mommy's book that she said he had to be careful of because it was old. This one wasn't old though. He looked up at Sam.

"Sure, Dean." Sam picked him up book and all. "Just don't think I'm going to ever let you forget you picked the Three Kittens."

Dean nestled back down into his seat and kept one hand on his Harold book as he laid his head back down on his dragon. He didn't want Sam to forget him.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam smoothed Dean's hair back from his forehead as he slept. The cart was getting full and Lisa was still glued to them. Sam kept up the charm and hoped he was doing the right thing. He really wanted to just sit for a minute and loudly freak out, but Dean needed him. Dean was <em>four<em>.

Staring at the movies, Sam tried to remember what a four year old might like or watch. Lisa found How to Train Your Dragon and Sam pulled anything Pixar that he saw. He noticed Flight of the Navigator so he got that too.

Dean started to snore as they headed for the front of the store. Sam watched Lisa's coworker shake their head at her as they approached.

She turned and smiled at him. "Well, Dean doesn't match any missing person's sheet we've got up on the board and he doesn't seem scared of you at all, so I think we'll pronounce you brothers."

Sam started setting everything on the belt as Lisa handed the tags from the clothes they'd put on Dean to the cashier. "Thanks, I think."

She laughed. "Nobody is dumb enough to come into a deserted Walmart at 2:30 in the morning with a kidnapped kid. Bored is bored though."

Sam nodded. "I understand. I didn't even think with the fire and all. He's just lost...so much." Sam had to close his eyes as he realized just how much Dean really had lost. Watching him finger the books had been heartbreaking.

Lisa sat a hand on his arm and then turned to help load the bags in the cart. "Well, enough with the sappy stuff. Let's get this out to your car and I'll help you put the car seat in and take down your plate number." She winked at him.

With a snort, Sam lead out with the cart.

\* \* \*

><p>Getting Dean laid down was simple enough, he was like a sack of potatoes. And still snoring. Sam slipped back out of their room and

dropped to the curb by the car.<p>

"Shit." He rubbed his hands across his face. His brother was four and clinging to a stuffed dragon that Sam was sure was staring at him. He scrubbed his hand through his hair. He had no idea how he was going to get Dean back to being an adult or what to do with him now.

He stared at his cellphone and tried to work out who to call. He scrolled through his list of contacts and stopped on Bobby. Well, he was damned either way he supposed.

Sam hit send and listened to the ringing.

"What?"

"It's Sam. I've got a problem."

Bobby cursed and there was a shuffling noise. "It'd damn well better be a big problem."

"Dean turned into a four year old." Sam listened to the silence for a few moments. "I think he's actually him as four. He's not talking at all. And he's too quiet for it to be before Mom. I think. I'm not sure. It might just be the time of night..."

"Shut up."

Sam closed his mouth with a snap of his teeth.

"He's how old?"

"Four."

Bobby sighed. "You'd better hightail it here. And make sure you get him some damn shoes before you get here. He'll cut up bare feet in the yard."

Sam felt lightheaded for a few breathes. "Oh. Wow. Thanks."

"Don't thank me yet, boy." There was banging noise and the Bobby's footsteps. "Don't forget his stomach is smaller and so is his bladder."

"Right." Sam leaned over his knees and closed his eyes. "He's tiny, Bobby."

"Of course he is, if he's four."

Sam smiled at the silent dumbass he could hear on the end of that sentence. "Sorry I woke you up."

"Nothing doing. I'll be waiting."

"Thank you." Sam waited until Bobby had hung up before he closed the cellphone. He slipped back into the room and found Dean had thrown off his covers and was whimpering in his sleep.

"Dean." Sam flicked the sheet back out of the way and laid his hand on Dean's head. "It's alright."

With a cut off whine, Dean flopped over onto his side and sighed before starting to snore again.

"Great." Sam laid down on the other bed and stared at the pile of sacks on the dresser. He'd nearly maxed out one of the emergency cards with their shopping spree. He glanced at Dean and Toothless was staring at him. Sam turned his head. "I need to sleep."

He was going to be doing all the driving and packing. He sat up. He'd forgot to get a duffel for Dean's new things. Sam sighed and went out to the car too look for something to use. He wasn't going to sleep anyway.

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><p>Dean sat up and pulled the dragon closer. He had sort of hoped he'd wake up to the right sized Sammy, but he watched as the huge Sam took things out the door. He guessed not.</p>

Dean slipped down the edge of the bed and took the dragon with him to the bathroom. After he'd peed, Dean stared up at the counter towards the sink.

"Hey, Dean." Sam came up behind him and Dean tilted his head back to look up at him. "You okay?"

Pointing at the sink, Dean looked at Sam.

"Oh, right." Sam wrapped his arm around Dean's waist. "Up you go."

Dean let Sam do the water and washed his hands. Next he carefully did the toothpaste because normally he didn't get to do that part without an adult hand overtop of his own. When he was done, Dean kicked Sam in the thigh.

"Ow. Okay, okay." Sam gently sat him down. "Do you know what you want to wear?"

Blinking, because Dean usually only got to wear what he wanted on cartoon day and that'd been yesterday so today should be good clothes day, not cartoon day again. Dean watched Sam carefully to see if it was just something he'd forgotten, like adults sometimes did or something else.

Sam didn't seem to notice as he laid out some of the new clothes and looked towards Dean.

Dean picked the jeans that had the scrunchy waist because it meant he'd be able to pull them up by himself, no buttons. The shirt with the Batman signal on it was good too. And soon Dean was struggling to get his head through the hole because Sam didn't know it needed stretched and Dean couldn't make it big and get it on without falling over.

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><p>Sam frowned as he tried to get Dean's shirt on him. Clothes shouldn't be this hard. Dean's head popped through and Sam tried not

to smile as Dean glared at him. "Sorry."<p>

Dean rolled his eyes and pulled Toothless to him. He looked up at Sam and then glared at the little shoes they'd gotten.

"Don't like shoes, huh?"

With a shake of his head, Dean pushed one of the shoes away with his toe. Sam looked at the shoes and his brother's feet. He thought about it and quickly decided that it wasn't worth the fight until they were at Bobby's.

"How about I carry you to the car?" Sam smiled back as Dean beamed and held up his arms.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean watched the sky go by in the window with his dragon pulled in tight to his chest. He wondered if he was going further away from home or if Sam was actually home. Maybe it was the car. He leaned over and petted the seat beside the edge of his car seat. He liked the car. It felt safe.</p>

They stopped to eat and Dean convinced Sam to carry him into the diner. He even got to bring his dragon. There were lots of people, but no one seemed to mind he wasn't walking like a big boy. He didn't really feel like being a big boy right now.

They sat down and Sam flipped through the menu. "I have no idea what you will eat."

Dean tilted his head. He wanted milk. He held his hands out and mimed drinking from a cup like the big boy he was supposed to be.

"Right, a drink." Sam flipped a page. "You want milk?"

Grinning, Dean nodded.

"Chocolate or white milk?"

He frowned. They could get chocolate milk?

Sam glanced at him and back down at the page. "How about we get both and I'll just drink what you don't, okay?" He flipped another page. "Pancakes?"

It took Dean a moment to figure out Sam was asking him. He shook his head.

"What about cereal?" Sam looked hopeful.

Dean wrinkled his nose.

"No to cereal." Sam's finger moved down the page. "Oatmeal? No, that's something you never seemed to like. What about a cinnamon roll?"

With a nod, Dean leaned forward and pointed to the only picture on the page.

"And bacon? You want a cinnamon roll and bacon?"

Dean smiled happily at Sam.

"Well, there goes any doubt that you're Dean."

He blinked and sat back.

"No, no." Sam leaned forward and sat his hand on the table. "I don't doubt you. It is just that you never pass up a chance at bacon. That's all."

Dean wondered if this was like when Sammy threw up on him and everyone said that's just what babies did. That he wasn't trying to hurt him so Dean shouldn't get mad.

"Sorry, Dean."

He patted Sam's hand then turned to look at their car out the window. It was a pretty car. He liked that it matched his dragon. He propped the dragon up so it could see Sam too. He grinned as Sam frowned at the dragon.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam ignored the appalled looks of the waitress and let Dean make himself a sticky mess. He had no idea how much sugar was too much and had been happy when Dean had only drank a few shallows of chocolate milk before switching to the white milk.</p>

When Dean was done, Sam tucked Toothless under his arm and led Dean to the bathroom where he held still while Sam cleaned him off. When he was done, Dean wiggled to get down and went into one of the stalls.

He poked his head back out and motioned to Sam. Wondering what Dean wanted, Sam came over and figured it out when Dean pushed the door shut a second time and then stared at him when it swung back open.

"Oh, right, sorry." Sam held the door shut and listened to the rustle of Dean's clothing. He hoped Bobby could come up with a way to fix this. He really didn't want to have to raise Dean.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean woke up as the car shut off. There was a beat up house in his window and Dean thought maybe that meant they were there. Where ever that happened to be. Dean found his buckle and snapped it open with a little effort.</p>

He climbed over the side of his car seat and drug the dragon with him. Sam was talking to someone outside the car, so Dean clambered over his bag to the door and pulled on the handle. The car liked him because the heavy door swung right out and caught without coming back to try to bite him.

Dean sat on the edge of the seat and slid off to the ground, the dragon coming with him. The man with Sam was tall, but not wide. He looked down at Dean and raised his eyebrows.

"Well, shit."

Dean frowned at him.

He bent down. "Sorry, son. Just surprised me is all." He pointed at the dragon. "I see you've got a friend there. What's his name?"

Dean looked up at Sam because he called the dragon a name.

"Like I said he doesn't talk, Bobby."

The man, Bobby, stood back up. "I heard ya the first time." He pulled open the door next to him. "Want to see my house, Dean?"

With a glance to check with Sam, Dean moved carefully forward. He had no shoes on and the grass was a little long. He watched where he put his feet so no one could tell him he'd not been careful enough, and went into the house.

Books. There were books everywhere Dean looked. He stopped a few feet into the hallway and turned to look at the adults. The new man almost ran into him before he sidestepped.

"What'd you stop for?"

Dean pointed at the nearest pile of books and looked to Sam.

Sam frowned as he looked at the books. "They are just books, Dean."

He pulled on the bag that Sam was carrying that held his Harold book. Then he pointed at the books again.

Sam's face cleared. "Oh." He knelt down. "Don't worry, your books won't get lost in here, okay?"

Dean looked up at the new man.

"Don't look at me." He held out his hand. "Let's go find the couch, huh?"

A couch meant a TV so Dean took a hold of the man's finger, checked that Sam was following and let himself be lead on into the house.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam leaned his forehead against the fridge. He was only going to get a few minutes respite before he had to go sit with Dean again. Taking deep even breaths, Sam banged his head lightly against the door.</p>

"That does't actually knock thoughts into your head, you idjit."

Sam sighed. "I don't even know where to start."

Bobby pushed Sam out of the way and got into the fridge. He poured milk into a wide short glass. "He's still your brother."

"Who refuses to talk."

"He'll come around." Bobby glanced towards his living room and lowered his voice. "He keeps checking the ceilings."

Sam rubbed his face. "I noticed." He took the milk from Bobby. "Thanks for putting us up."

With a shrug, Bobby moved to answer one of phones on his kitchen wall as it started ringing.

Sam took the milk and went back to his seat by Dean. Giving the milk to Dean, Sam then waited until he was done drinking before taking the glass back. He sat it down and picked up the book on age regression he was reading through.

Dean never took his eyes off the TV. They were watching the Pixar shorts, although Sam had skipped over Jack-Jack Attack. Dean was currently entranced by Boundin'. Sam smiled as Dean made them both bounce as he moved with the song.

Bobby watched them from the doorway before moving away to look for another book. Sam cupped the back of Dean's head as he yawned.

"Getting tired?"

Dean shook his head and pointed at the bag with his things.

Sam had no idea what he wanted. "You can get anything out you want, Dean."

As Dean slipped off the couch, Sam watched him check the ceiling before moving over to the bag. Dean fought with the zipper and just as Sam started to get up to help it gave way. Dean rooted around until he came up with one of his books.

He grinned at Sam as he brought it back to the couch. Dean pushed the book onto Sam's thigh before he started to climb up. Sam tried not to move as Dean leaned into his side.

Dean pulled the book to their shared lap and opened it to the first page. He tapped the first word and looked up at Sam.

Sam took the side of the book that Dean didn't have a hold of and started to read. It was completely different to be reading to someone instead of being read to as he could remember Dean having done for him when he was small. This little Dean was bossy. Jabbing at words and tracing the purple crayon's path on the pages. He'd flip back a page every once in a while to have Sam reread something.

Sam was exhausted by the time they reached the end of the book. And then Dean smiled up at him, bumped his shoulder into Sam's ribs and opened the book at the beginning. Sam stared at him as Dean jabbed the first word again.

There was a snort from the doorway. Sam looked up and glared at Bobby.

"Let's see you do any better."

Bobby held up his hands in surrender. "Oh, no. He likes how you read."

Dean tugged on his shirt and Sam went back to reading. It was boring and gratifying all at once. He wondered if Dean had felt the same way when Sam had been little. When Dean was back to being an adult he'd have to try to ask him.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean kept watch on the ceiling as the evening wore on. This was only the second house he'd been in since Mommy had burned and it worried him because Mommy had gotten clear up on the ceiling and burned when there hadn't even been a chair to stand on anywhere near. He kept an eye on the adults too, because he wanted to make sure they didn't end up on the ceilings.</p>

The only time he forgot was when the pink eyed jackalope had been sort of singing. Dean wondered if he could make the TV show that one again. They were using little discs instead of the tapes Dad used to handle because they were frag...they'd break. Sam handled the little discs and had said that if Dean liked something they could watch it again.

Dean let his eyes droop as Sam read through Harold's book again. Dean really liked how the purple swooped all around the page. Like a little road. The man, Bobby, came into the room as Sam finished again.

"He need a bath?"

Sam looked down at him and back to Bobby. "Uhm. Probably."

Dean sighed. He didn't even have a boat for the bathtub. He took the book away from Sam and shoved it under the dragon. Then he climbed down off the couch and looked up at Sam.

"You want to find your pajamas?" Sam stood up and handed his big book to Bobby.

Dean nodded and looked through his bag for the soft pants with Big Bird on them. He showed them to Bobby and grinned.

Bobby smiled. "Those look fine, Dean." He looked in the direction Sam had gone. "You want me to show you where your brother went?"

He took Bobby's finger in his hand and waited. Bobby looked surprised for a moment and then took off across the floor. Dean kept one eye on the ceiling as they went.

\* \* \*

><p>Getting Dean to sleep was far harder than Sam would have thought. The bath was alright, even though Sam wondered about Dean just holding completely still unless told to wash himself. It'd been weird. All Dean wanted help with after had been drying his hair and holding clothing for him to step into.</p>

After that it got a little crazy. Dean didn't want to get into bed. Sam thought he might bruise from where Dean had clamped down on his

wrist. Sam looked down at himself where Dean was clutching him and Toothless together. Dean had his head turned and Toothless tucked under his chin.

Sam tugged on Dean's arm and that just made Dean tighten his hold. "Dean."

Dean shook his head, tilted it to look at the ceiling again, and then squeezed his eyes shut.

Sam carded his fingers through his brother's hair. "Okay, this isn't working. How about we go back downstairs and you can lay down by me and watch \_Boundin'\_ again while I research?"

Dean nodded against his ribs. Sam struggled to rearrange them enough to stand up and haul Dean with him. He swung Dean onto his hip and Toothless was pushed into his spot between Dean's chest and Sam's side.

Sam turned them sideways to get through the bedroom door. "You do know that Mom's death wasn't your fault, don't you?"

Dean frowned and pulled his eyes away from the ceiling he'd been watching. He shrugged and pressed into Sam's side.

"You didn't cause anything bad, Dean. You don't have to worry. The ceilings aren't going to do anything."

Dean glanced up at the ceiling as Sam spoke and then he tucked his face into Toothless. Sam frowned and passed Bobby on their way back into the living room. Sam settled Dean onto the couch. He put \_Boundin'\_ on repeat and waited for Dean to get sucked in before he retreated to the desk in the kitchen and sighed.

Bobby dropped another book on the table. "You think he's right after the fire?"

"Pretty sure, yeah." Sam put down the book he'd been looking through. "He wasn't checking the motel's ceiling like this."

"Motel ain't a house." Bobby pushed another book at Sam. "You know anything it could have been?"

Sam shook his head. "No. We were between jobs and Dean wasn't even banged up last time."

"Seen the angel lately?"

"No." Sam leaned over so he could see to check on Dean, who was still watching the TV. "I haven't tried calling him yet, either."

"Maybe tomorrow." Bobby looked up for his book. "You need to sleep in the same room with him, Sam."

Nodding, Sam went back to his book. "I'm going to wait for him to go to sleep and then move him. He was freaking out upstairs."

\* \* \*

><p>Dean woke up form the dream where he always drops Sammy to find

Sam moaning and thrashing. Kneeling, Dean looked around in the light coming from the window. They were in the bedroom that Dean didn't like much.<p>

Watching Sam have a nightmare was like watching Dad, but quieter. Dean smacked Sam's stomach and he came awake. Sam pulled him close and panted into Dean's hair.

"Sorry...sorry, I'm so sorry, Dean."

Patting Sam's arm, Dean let himself been squished. Mom had always said that sometimes people needed the squishy sort of hug and Dean figured this could be Sam's sometime.

Slowly, Sam calmed down. Dean eased away and wiped at Sam's tear trails.

Sam sniffed hard and wiped his cheeks. "Sorry about that." He got up straightened the bedding with Dean still sitting on it. Sam sat back down. "You okay?"

Dean nodded and pulled on Sam's arm until he lay clear down. Dean wrapped Sam's arm around himself and went back to sleep.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam found himself in a dream. He looked around, but this couldn't be his dream. He'd been dreaming of Dean being pulled down to Hell, not about everything being purple. Sam moved forward until he saw a little boy near the edge of a purple pond.<p>

Sitting down next to the boy, Sam found he was sitting next to Dean. "Hi."

Dean looked up from his purple hands. "Hi."

Sam blinked. "You talk."

Blinking back, Dean turned to look across the purple pond. "Sure. I don't out there right now. I don't feel like it."

Sam set his hand on Dean's back. "That's alright."

"Makes you mad, though." Dean frowned and wiped his purple hands on his Big Bird pants. Big Bird turned purple.

"No, it doesn't make me mad. I usually figure out what you want." Sam rubbed Dean's back. "I'm sorry you don't feel like talking."

"I miss Mom." Dean looked at Sam. "Dad cries and Sammy cries too. And I can't." He looked down at his hands. "I'm busy with getting them to eat. And trying to care for Sammy. I start to cry, but I just...can't."

Sam pulled Dean into his lap. "That's alright. You'll cry when you've time and are ready. It isn't bad that you haven't cried yet."

"I almost dropped Sammy when I ran like Dad said." Dean whispered like it was going to break him apart to keep talking. "I saw Mommy burning."

"Oh, Dean." Sam hugged Dean tighter. "I didn't know that." He skirted the issue of Dean having seen their Mom while she burned. "You ran with me?"

"Daddy handed you to me and said run, don't look back. So I ran. I was barefoot and I slipped on our front step. I nearly dropped you. I got to Daddy's car and waited there like I'm supposed to do for a house fire."

Sam could feel Dean trying to rock, so he rocked him. "You did really good, Dean. You saved me." He thought a moment about what he'd need to hear if it had been him. "I'm really proud of you."

Dean's breath hitched.

"Thank you for saving me."

Dean started to sob.

Sam rocked his brother as he cried purple tears and they filled the purple pond to overflowing. A little purple boy peeked at them from behind a tree and Sam watched to see if he'd come closer, but he didn't.

Sam kissed Dean's hair. "I love you." He started rubbing Dean's back. "I'm so glad you survived."

Dean's body heaved with more wet sobs and he clung to Sam's shirt. For once, Sam was happy to be in someone else's head.

\* \* \*

><p><em>Meanwhile... well, sort of meanwhile...</em>

Dean woke to a baby's whimpering. He blinked at the blank ceiling over his head and frowned. His clothes were...He bolted upright. "Son of a bitch."

Next to his bed Sammy was whimpering in his sleep in his makeshift crib. That half-fussy crap Dean vaguely remembered as having come to hate when he was...Dean looked around. He remembered this, kind of. Now having been here once as an adult he knew it was Missouri's house, when in his vague memory of it as a kid she'd just been a nice lady that didn't mind him not talking. He had to get out of the house before Missouri woke up and sensed him here.

With a finale glance at Sammy, Dean slipped out into the hallway and down to the room he figured held his Dad. Silently, he grabbed a shirt and pants from his Dad's duffel before heading down the stairs. He unlatched the back door and went out into the back yard. Dean looked up at the moon and tried to breathe.

He quickly changed out of the shredded bedclothes into his Dad's borrowed clothing. He'd totally forgotten about his few days visiting the future. He'd been so mad because he'd come back in the middle of Cars and hadn't gotten to see who had won the big race.

He had to stay out of the way for three or four days and then be back in Missouri's house for the switchback. Dean couldn't remember what

had caused him to snap back where he was supposed to be, so he thought either Sam had fixed it or he had back here.

\_I hate time travel.\_ Dean slipped around to the front of the house and memorized the house number. He headed down the street to the corner to get the street name. He'd not really paid attention when Sam had first drug them there in the future.

That done, Dean wondered where he was going to sleep. He gave a moment's thought to the old house, but dismissed that. The smoke and sulfur smell won't be restful and he knew Mom wouldn't met him as a spirit until she defends Sam and him.

He wondered down the street towards where he thought he remembered a park. The English language needed better tenses for time travel. He wondered why they'd never invented them for \_Doctor Who\_.

He curled up on a park bench and tried to sleep.

\* \* \*

><p>When Dean woke again he was still in the past. And being stared at by a little girl. He blinked. She blinked back. He sat up and she backed up a few steps.</p>

"Morning."

She cocked her head. "You were sleeping outside."

"Yeah. It's called camping."

She wrinkled her nose. "You don't have a tent."

Dean rubbed his hand over the back of his head. "Should you be talking to me?"

"Nope." She grinned. "You aren't bad. I can tell."

He blinked. "Really? How?"

"Your shoulder glows." She shrugged. "It looks like angel light." Then she smiled and waved as she backed away. "Mom's calling, I have to go. Bye."

"Bye." He looked at his shoulder to see if Cas' handprint was glowing. It wasn't. He turned back, but there was no little girl in sight. Dean blinked and looked around. "Huh." He wondered if she'd been a ghost. She'd had on a Dukes of Hazzard shirt, but nothing else that indicated a time frame.

Deciding to worry about it later, Dean stood, stretched, and set off to find something to eat.

He eventually ended up a few houses down from Missouri's watching his father search for him. Dean stayed out of sight and cringed every time Dad yelled his name. Missouri watched from her porch with Sammy in her arms. She held a scrap of the shredded pajamas in her hand.

He couldn't talk to them. Dean was pretty sure Missouri hadn't known

what he'd looked like before he showed up with Sam in the future.

"You should tell them you are okay."

Dean whirled around. It was the little girl again. "What the fuck?"

She blinked at him. "That isn't considered a nice word."

"No shit." He moved down the side of the house so that they couldn't possibly be seen by his Dad or Missouri. "What are you?"

She tilted her head to the side. "That's a little rude, don't you think? You haven't even asked my name."

Dean started to yell, but stopped himself. He couldn't afford to have Dad getting involved from following the sound. "Fine." He glared down at her. "What's your name?"

"I'm called Macha." She smiled and leaned forward to whisper. "I'm a goddess."

He stared at the fading orange of the General Lee on her shirt.  
"Really?"

She beamed at him. "Yep. Mom says she'll help you get back into the house in three days from the moment you arrived. No strings attached." She bounced on her feet. "I'd really like you to do me a favor in the future though."

"No strings attached, huh?"

Macha stuck her tongue out at him. "You don't have to do it. I'm just asking."

Dean leaned against the side of the house nearest him. "What would I have to do?"

Her smile came alive again as she bounced on her toes. "Raise a little boy until he's ready to be him again, that's all."

Dean blinked. "What's his name?"

She shook her head. "That'd be telling." Macha patted him on the arm. "You won't mind him too much. And he'll grow up really fast."

With a sigh, Dean nodded. "As long as it doesn't hurt Sam, fine."

She wrapped herself around his leg. "Thank you, thank you. Mom will be so happy!" She backed off and twirled around in a circle. "You won't regret it, I swear to you."

He didn't tell her he already sort of did regret it. Instead he looked towards the front of the house. "Any chance I get to eat in the next couple of days? And say, maybe, get some shoes?" He wiggled his bare toes.

She frowned. "I hadn't thought about shoes. I'll ask one of my

sisters to get you a pair."

"You have sisters?"

"Two of them that are important. And three brothers, but hardly anyone remembers the boys."

Dean followed as Macha skipped towards the alley. "Who are your sisters then?"

She smiled at him as she made an opening in the fence ahead of them. "Why Morrigan and Badb, of course. Well, sometimes we get called other names." A raven landed on her shoulder. "Don't mind the ravens. They don't mean death like everyone thinks." She petted the bird and it turned white. "Just because they are scavenger birds, sheesh."

He kept following because he didn't have any other clear course of action, Dean watched as smaller plants moved out of her way. They waited until he'd passed before moving back in place. It was creepy, but Dean figured there wasn't much he could do about any of it.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean gaped at Macha's mother. She was the picture of a prefect farm wife from the 1800's. Long dress, pulled back hair, apron, and a little kid clinging to her leg. Dean couldn't tell the kid's gender since the kid was hiding their face in her dress.</p>

Macha skipped over to them and bounced on her toes. "He said he'd help."

"That's nice, dear. Set the table. We're going to have pie." She nudged the kid clinging to her towards Macha. "Glonn, go help your sister."

Dean took the plates before Macha dropped them and watched as she scolded Glonn into putting the forks on the proper side of the place setting. Dean sat in the chair Macha pointed him at and smiled when she boosted Glonn into his own seat.

"Macha, did you tell Dean you had siblings?" She sat pie down in the middle of the table as she asked her question.

Leaning forward, Macha reached for the pie, only to have her hand pushed away. She sat back down. "I told him the important ones."

"Ah." She pointed towards the back of the house. "Go call them all in for pie."

"Yes, Mother." Macha slid off her chair and ran for the back door with a loud pounding of feet.

Dean watched warily as more pie just appeared on the table. Glonn giggled and patted the edge of the table with his tiny hands.

"She means well, Dean Winchester, but sometimes I think she's more her sisters than herself." She pushed a pie towards him. "Please, eat. I'm called Ernmas and I will do you no harm."

He poked at the pie with his fork. "You understand why I'm distrustful?" He broke the top crust and watched the steam curl up.

She patted his arm. "Oh, yes, Dean." She stood and started pulling jackets off the horde of children that appeared with Macha's return. "Everyone this is Dean. He'll be staying for the next few days. Don't mind the self-loathing. He'll get over that."

Dean kept his mouth shut because if his life had taught him anything it was not to argue with a goddess you didn't know anything about.

She laughed as she sat back down. "No one pays attention to the things that came before them. That's just the way of beings." She pointed at him with her fork. "You know that your mark has been noticed by the young angel that will make it appear on you in the future."

"Damn." He rolled his left shoulder. "I can't explain it to him. I'm pretty sure he didn't know about it before he rescued me."

Ernmas looked thoughtful. "Well, letting him find you now would be problematic, then." She cocked her head. "Unless he doesn't remember it afterward."

He swallowed the bite he was chewing. "No. Uhm, sorry, just no. Messing with his memory isn't...proper."

Smiling at him, Ernmas took another bite. "I knew I'd like you, Dean." She waved her fork at her children. "These are all my children. My adopted boy isn't here, though." She narrowed her eyes at Macha.

"You'd have had to wipe his memory of it, Mommy." Macha took a bite of her pie. "And that's no better than messing with Castiel, is it?"

Ernmas sat back. "No, it isn't." She stood up as Dean chew his last bite. "Would you like to see the house?"

Dean stood as well. "Sure." He thought he should still be hungry after one slice of pie, but he felt as full as if he'd eaten a whole dinner.

He followed her through the house and nodded at everything she pointed out. It reminded him of a mash up of his old home, Bobby's without all the book piles, and Missouri's place. They got to the back door.

"All I ask is that you not use this door." She opened it and the light from the other side was bright, but not blinding. Not all white, but rather shifting like walking through a rainbow. "It wouldn't do to have you get lost. You may open the door and call Macha or the other children if I ask, but do not walk through."

He edged away. "I'll remember, ma'am."

She closed the door. "I know you will. Now for your bedroom, Dean."

\* \* \*

><p>Dean managed to shoo Macha out of his temporary bedroom with a promise to take her to the park in the morning. He flopped down on his bed and stared at the stars on his ceiling. He was a little worried they were actual stars, but he really didn't want to find out.</p>

He had thought that dealing with a goddess would piss him off like dealing with angels tended to, but it was more like dealing with a single mother and a bunch of kids. Sitting down to watch Dukes of Hazzard had been interesting once one of the boys, Ollom, started to compare the General Lee to the Impala. Macha defended the General Lee, obviously in love, while Ollom defended the Impala as the best car.

They hadn't tried to pull him into it, instead getting out what looked like Hot Wheels cars and making them zip around the living room's floor. Glonn had climbed into Dean's lap and fallen asleep. One of the girls, Banba, had made little horses appear to run with the cars.

Ernmas had appeared shortly after that, shooing them all out, picking Glonn up from Dean's lap, and bidding him good night. Leaving only Macha to follow him to his room.

Now he was a little afraid to go to sleep. His room was nice, and he wasn't worried about getting attacked by anything here. Ernmas had even handed him salt for the windows and doors, without comment, so that wasn't the source of his restlessness.

Dean shifted and closed his eyes. He didn't deserve all this, not the food, the place to stay, or them being nice to him. A knock sounded on his door.

"Come in."

Ernmas stepped inside and closed the door softly. She came and sat down on the edge of his bed as Dean started to sit up. "Lay back down, boy."

Following her order, Dean wondered why she was calling him 'boy' now.

"I would like you to listen because I've something to say. I will understand if you do not allow it to touch your heart, but I need to have you hear it."

He watched her smooth out her apron. "Okay."

She pinned him with her gaze. "You were, will be, the first person ever pulled from Hell by an angel. Ever." She looked up at the ceiling. "I'm old enough to remember when their feuding started and I thought at the time it looked to rival even Odin's family's in-fighting."

Dean stayed quiet because he didn't know what to say.

"It doesn't make you less that you lost yourself in Hell." She

pressed him down with a hand on his chest as Dean started to sit up to protest. "Be quiet. It is not a sign of weakness that you adapted. You must stop hurting yourself for surviving it until he came for you."

"It wasn't surviving. I became one of them."

She soothed her hand across his chest. "Survival is sometimes about going native. I do not see what else you could have done, boy. I do not see you being you if you'd not taken some control from them upon yourself."

"Control I used to torture, yeah, that was me."

She gripped his chin and Dean blinked at her. "You will hear me, Dean Winchester. The first person ever raised from Hell by a being of Heaven is you. You. Not your brother, or that half-brother, but you. That doesn't make you feel worthy, I know this. You were raised too much like a Marine for that. Know that it makes you the most important person to the angel that did it. More important than finding his God even." She let him go and sat up. "Think about what scars he carries because of his choice. That he's proud to have gotten you out. That he chose you."

Dean blinked several times, trying to keep tears from falling. "I just...don't feel like I was worth all that trouble."

Her face softened, and she adjusted the quilt on him. "That just makes you more worthy, dear. Give him a hug when you see him next. It will do you a world of good." She licked her thumb and before Dean could doge it, pressed it to his forehead. "Sleep well."

"Uhm. Thanks. You too."

She smiled as she left him alone.

Dean started to reach up to wipe at his forehead, but then thought better of it. Within a few seconds he knew no more as he slid into sleep.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean woke up feeling like he'd slept for days. He stared at the ceiling that now showed fluffy white clouds. He'd not had a single nightmare. Just dreams of watching a little version of him talk to an adult Sam.</p>

He got up and found clothes in the closet. They looked like his clothes. As he pulled on a shirt he decided he wasn't going to ask if they were actually his clothes, or just replicas.

Macha pushed open his door as he was pulling on socks. "Mom's making pancakes."

"I'll be right there."

"And afterwards we go to the park."

He nodded as he stood and let Macha lead him. "Yes. I promised you the park."

She beamed up at him as she pulled him along.

\* \* \*

><p><em>In another time...<em>

Sam jolted awake to the sound of laughter. He followed the noise downstairs to find Dean laughing and pointing at the TV with Toothless in his lap as he looked up at Bobby.

Bobby nodded. "Yeah, I saw it."

Dean turned back to the TV. Sam could see it was How to Train Your Dragon and they seemed to be to the part where Toothless was flying again for the first time after his injury. Sam wondered if Bobby had had to skip the beginning with all the fire or not.

Getting himself a cup of coffee, Sam settled at the table and glanced at the books that had gotten him nowhere last night. Bobby eased his way out of the other room.

"Morning."

"Hey." Bobby sat down across from him. "He's laughing some today. No words though."

"He just isn't ready." Sam didn't say that it no longer worried him, since he'd walked into his brother's dream. "Did he need to skip the first part of the movie?"

Bobby looked over his shoulder to where Dean was leaning forward every time Toothless went into a dive. "No. He kept hugging the toy and glancing at me. I offered, but he shook his head."

That didn't surprise him. Dean was always doing stubborn, brave things. Sam took a sip of his coffee. "I don't know how to fix it."

Bobby scratched his beard. "Maybe you ought to try the angel."

Sam sighed. "I'll try calling him after I'm done looking through these." He tapped the book in front of him.

"Fair enough." Bobby headed across the kitchen, leaving Sam to watch his brother while he researched.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean used his dragon to shield his face as the huge evil dragon in the movie blew great big balls of fire. When it was over he waited anxiously for them to show that Hiccup had lived. He frowned when Hiccup's foot turned out to be metal now, but then when he flew with Toothless it was alright again because they were an even better team.</p>

He got up and took his dragon over to where Sam was flipping through big books. He poked Sam in the leg.

"What, Dean?" Sam looked down at him and then over to the TV. "You

want a new movie?"

Dean shook his head and pushed on Sam until he pushed away from the table enough for Dean to climb into his lap. Sam was no help and it took Dean a few minutes to work his way into the right place without losing hold of his dragon.

Once he was in place, Dean leaned into Sam's chest and sighed. Sam relaxed under Dean when he stopped moving.

"You okay?" Sam started to rub his back.

Nodding, Dean hitched his dragon higher up and let Sam hold him. He didn't know how to ask Sam to tell him if they were a good team or not without talking and he still wasn't ready for that.

He slithered down and went to the back door.

"Put shoes on if you go outside, Dean!"

Dean stuck his tongue out at the shoes, but put them on anyway, the sticky strip was way better than laces, and carefully opened the door to the outside. He looked around carefully and took his dragon with him as he ventured out.

He found the other adult, Bobby, out in the yard of dead cars. He waved.

"Hey, Dean." He looked down at him. "How about you help an old man?"

Cocking his head, Dean held up his dragon.

"Yeah, the toy can come along."

Dean nodded and held up his hand. Bobby stared at him for a moment before taking Dean's hand gingerly. Dean rolled his eyes and took a hold of Bobby properly.

"You ever get to look for transmissions before?"

Dean shook his head. He did what Bobby asked and crawled under and over things to look for the things Bobby talked about. He left his dragon in Bobby's care a few times as they worked. Sometimes, Dean thought Bobby already knew what he sent Dean to check, but since he got to help Dean didn't try to stop him.

Eventually they ended up sitting on an old Chevy's hood looking towards the house. Bobby was holding his dragon for him and Dean was carefully wiping his hands off onto a rag.

"You know that he's your little brother, right?"

Dean looked up before going back to cleaning his fingers. He nodded.

"You and him make a good team. Idjits the both of you, but somehow it always works out in the end."

Dean stopped cleaning and watched Bobby stare at the house.

"He was really hurting when we lost you for a while. You came back, but then both you and him were hurting. It was hard to be around that." Bobby looked at him. "You're a good man when you're all grown up."

Dean looked at the house and back to Bobby. He made strangling motions to his dragon and then raised his eyebrows at Bobby.

Bobby looked confused. "Are you asking if you hunt monsters?" Dean nodded. "Yeah, you and Sam. You try to help people and stop evil things. Sometimes it works and sometimes it sucks."

Nodding, because sucks sounded like a good way to describe it, Dean jumped down from the car's hood. He needed actual soap to get his hands clean. And tonight Sam said he'd get to meet a real angel if the angel decided to show up. He couldn't meet an angel with dirty hands. Mom would have had a fit.

\* \* \*

><p>Bobby sat the dragon down on the couch as he listened to Dean flip on the water in the bathroom. The step stool he'd put in there must have been tall enough or the boy wouldn't have been able to reach the water without climbing on the counter.</p>

"Anything?"

Sam looked up and Bobby wanted to drag him into the kitchen and make him eat something. "Nothing useful. I'm going to call for Castiel and see if he comes."

He nodded. "I'll start dinner." Bobby went into the kitchen and forced himself not to flinch when Dean appeared silently beside him as he was looking for lettuce in the refrigerator. "If you want to help, find me the lettuce."

Dean nodded and dashed over to the table where he put the dragon toy on a seat before coming back and looking in the lowest drawer.

Bobby left him to it and went to turn the stove on. He lit the burner and turned to get the skillet. The sound of the fridge door closing made him look over and Dean was staring at the stove, his little chest heaving.

"Shit." Bobby flipped the burner off and took the lettuce from Dean's arms. "Hey, hey. Dean." He turned Dean so he couldn't see the stove and knelt down in front of the boy. "I'm sorry, son. I didn't think about the flame bothering you."

Dean leaned forward and pressed his forehead to Bobby's chest. He cleared his throat. "No fire."

Bobby froze at the whisper and looked up at the gasp from the doorway. Sam was staring at Dean. "Sorry, Dean. I won't turn it back on. We'll use the microwave, okay?"

Dean hiccuped and nodded with his head still against Bobby's chest.

"How about Sam turns on that pink cartoon with the bouncing stuff while I make dinner?"

Sam snapped out of it and came over, gently pulling Dean away from Bobby. "Come on, Dean. We'll watch TV until dinner. You want Toothless to come with us?" He hefted the boy in his arms.

Bobby watched them grab the toy dragon and head for the other room. He leaned against his kitchen counter and rubbed at his eyes for a while until the urge to cry went away.

\* \* \*

><p>Castiel showed up during dessert. Sam nearly lost his bowl of ice cream as Dean slammed into his leg and buried his face in Sam's knee.</p>

"I believe I have scared him."

Sam looked up from Dean and smiled at Cas. "Hey, Cas. This is Dean when he's four. He's a little unsettled this evening."

Castiel knelt down. "I am pleased to met you Dean Winchester."

Dean peeked at Cas from his place at Sam's knee and glared. Sam sat the bowl down and picked Dean up.

"It's okay, Dean. Cas is an angel, so he knows your name."

Standing up, Castiel cocked his head and stared at Dean. "He is from the past."

Sam could have hugged him. "So it's just a time travel switch then?"

"Dean is...obscured from my sight." Castiel frowned. "I am not certain he is in the past."

Dean looked up at Sam and jerked his head at Cas. "No, he knows you're here. He means the adult you." Sam turned to get the bowl of melting ice cream. "Here, let's seat you down with your ice cream and I'll talk to Cas for a few minutes."

Sam got Dean settled and then all but grabbed Cas by the arm and pulled him outside. "He's not talking. And you're sure you can't feel the adult Dean anywhere or when?"

Cas sat on the step and Sam followed him down. "I can feel him, but not pinpoint him. Something very powerful is masking Dean's location. He isn't afraid."

Sam blew out a breath he felt he'd been holding since waking up to a kid for a brother. "It's good he isn't afraid, probably. You have any idea how to fix it? Or what might be masking Dean?"

"I do not." Castiel clasped his hands together. "Perhaps it would be best to wait. There was a short period in my past when I was looking for what seemed to be a part of myself that I knew I hadn't given away. It only lasted three days of Earth time."

Sam leaned back against the porch support behind him. "You didn't know it was Dean?"

"I did not met him until I was sent to retrieve him, Sam." Castiel turned his head towards the house. "The boy does not speak?"

"Well, he can talk, but he just doesn't." Sam sighed. "He spoke earlier when Bobby turned on his stove and scared Dean on accident. And I think I walked into Dean's dream last night and we talked there."

"He is very mournful." Castiel looked at Sam. "He worries for you."

Sam nodded. "Dean always worries for me." Standing up, he held out his hand to Cas. "Come on. We'll watch a movie with Dean and I'll introduce you to his toy dragon, Toothless."

"He does not give the toy a name, Sam."

Sam rolled his eyes. "Don't ruin my fun, Castiel."

\* \* \*

><p>Dean kept an eye on the angel in case he made the ceilings burn. Bobby had disappeared when Cas had sat down with Sam and him to watch another movie. Dean shoved his dragon onto Cas' lap and was happy to see him turn the dragon over properly so he could see the TV too.</p>

Sam picked a spot in this movie because he said that Dean wouldn't like the starting part. Dean hadn't argued, busy fingering the angel's coat. He wondered why an angel needed a coat. In all the pictures he'd seen angels had robes.

"The man that allowed me to borrow his body owned and liked this coat."

Dean jerked his head up and blinked at Cas looking down at him.

"He probably doesn't know that you can read minds, Cas."

Cas nodded and looked down at him seriously. "I can read minds."

All Dean could think was his Dad's favorite set of words for when things didn't go the way he thought they should. \_Son of a bitch.\_

Cas raised an eyebrow at him. "That appears to be your favorite phrase when you are an adult as well."

Dean blinked. He screwed his eyes shut and thought really hard.

"You don't have to shout at me, Dean. I hear you. I know you and your brother because I was sent to help you."

Sam went tense beside them and Dean could feel the answering tension in Cas. He looked between the two of them, then settled his gaze on Cas.

"Alright. I promise not to upset Sam." Cas brushed his hand over Dean's head. "You must be tried. I understand you like Harold and his crayon. Purple, correct?"

Dean beamed and slid down to get his book. Sam was a spoilsport and made him do his teeth and pajamas before he was allowed to show Castiel his book. Sam and Cas helped him get tucked in with his dragon. They each read him a book, so Dean was happy he'd been able to get two books at the store.

Castiel closed the book as he finished. "I feel the purple crayon could not do all that."

Dean smiled sleepily at him.

"Ah, of course. Fiction is not meant to be reality, my mistake." Cas kissed him on the forehead just like Mom used to and Dean suddenly felt like crying.

He stiffed hard as Sam repeated the gesture. "You go to sleep, okay Dean? Cas will sit with you and watch over you."

Sam retreated and Dean looked at Cas.

"He is correct. I do not need to sleep, so I will watch over you while you do so." He cocked his head. His eyes went wide and he leaned forward. "She is, Dean. I promise you that she went to Heaven even though she burned to death."

Dean rubbed his nose and closed his eyes.

"Do not worry, Dean. You will cry for her when you are ready to do so." Cas' warmth spread out and Dean went to sleep wondering if Cas could stay with him always.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam was dreaming in Dean's head again. He could tell by the lack of Hell and the abundance of purple. He sat down by his brother near his pond. "Wow, you really like purple, don't you?"</p>

"It is blue and red put together. I like blue, but red is good too and most of the time I can only get one thing, so purple is both." He looked up from where he was feeding a purple frog by the pond.  
"See?"

Sam nodded. "Makes perfect sense in a four-year-old's logic."

"I think I like \_Thunder Cats\_ so I'll probably go with red now."

"\_Thunder Cats\_, huh?"

Dean nodded. "It showed the first show the day before I woke up with you. The next day should have been my birthday, but Daddy isn't celebrating because of Mommy dying."

"We missed your birthday?" Sam had always thought Dad had left Lawrence before Dean's fifth birthday. "We'll have to have cake and ice cream tomorrow to make up for it."

"The angel says Mom went to Heaven."

Sam watched as the little purple boy reappeared on the edge of the tree line. "As far as I know, he's right, she did."

Dean climbed into his lap and Sam let him. They sat for a while with Dean watching out across his pond, but not seeming to see the little boy in the trees. "I miss her."

"So do I." Sam wrapped his arm around Dean. "She loved you."

Nodding, Dean looked up at Sam. "She loved you too. She always smiled at you. Even when you threw up."

Sam chuckled. "Thanks, I think." He pointed at the little boy. "Do you see him?"

Dean shrugged. "Sometimes. He never talks to me. He talks to the little girl and the present."

Before Sam could ask what Dean was talking about he jolted awake to morning sunlight streaming into the room. "Damn it."

\* \* \*

><p><em>Sort of meanwhile, Macha and Dean (the adult) are in a park...</em>

Dean watched Macha go down the roller slide over and over. Glonn kept bringing bits of twig and rocks to show him. The rest seemed happy to swing or chase each other around without including him in it. The human children didn't seem to notice anything odd about the goddess' children.

Macha came running up. "Dean! Did you see me?"

He smiled at her. "I did."

She plopped down beside him and pointed at the balloon stand at the edge of the park. "I thought you'd like to know that he meant it when he said he went after people that deserved it."

Dean frowned and looked more closely at the clown. He was shorter than most men. "Gabriel."

She frowned and slapped a hand over his mouth. "Hush." She pointed with her other hand. "See that man that's watching Glonn?"

He pulled on her hand. "Yes."

"He's evil." She slipped down from the bench. "Just watch, okay?"

Knowing that meeting Gabriel now would be a bad idea, Dean nodded. He watched as the man tried to lure Glonn away. Glonn smiled innocently and went. Gabriel followed behind with his balloons.

Several minutes later Glonn came back alone. He ran over to them and

held up a ring.

Macha sighed. "Mom said not to keep bits afterwards."

"No, no. Loki gave it to me to give to Mom."

"Oh, alright then."

They gathered up the rest of the not-exactly-children and went back to Macha's house.

\* \* \*

><p>Ernmas watched as Dean ushered all her children into her house.  
"You saw him?"</p>

He gave her a sharp look. "He gave something to Glonn."

She looked down at Glonn holding a ring up to her. "He does like making me presents, doesn't he?" She pushed Glonn towards the kitchen. "You may have a candy since you got to be the bait."

Dean watched them all disperse. "Is he your adopted son that wasn't here yesterday?"

She patted his shoulder and slipped the ring he should have into his pocket while he was distracted by her touch. "Of course. I knew him before he took Loki's form. They talked to me and another goddess about how best to hide him. Poor thing."

"Poor thing?" Dean sat down at the table and she took a seat across from him.

"Yes. He was the youngest of the four brothers given hordes of baby angels to watch over. And the two closest started an argument worthy of the Greek deities. He felt every horrible thing they said to each other about, well, everything. Including him. And one day it just became too much. It was torture to him."

"How long did he stay with that happening?"

"A terribly long time. He cried for centuries when he first came to Earth." She smoothed her apron. "I adopted him and kept him safe until he worked out his deal to be Loki. Now when he's close the children play bait for him to catch the worst in need of judgement."

Dean rubbed his forehead. "He's the little boy Macha wants me to watch over in the future? You bring him back somehow?"

"He gave me a bit of his blood when he was still very despondent. So, yes, I can bring him back when the time comes. Or, most likely, since he is Loki he'll not actually die." She glanced upwards. "I'll be having a talk with the poor boy's Father either way." She smiled at him. "Pie?"

"Sure." He watched the plate set down with a perfectly steaming slice of pie on it. "Can you make me sleep until I'm supposed to go home? No offense, but your family is creepy."

She patted him on the shoulder again. "You'll have to wake up in time to say goodbye to Macha."

"Deal." Dean dug into the pie. It wasn't that he didn't like them, but the heart-to-hearts were starting to give him headaches.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean knew he was dreaming. He watched the little him talk to the adult Sam about their Mom. He could barely remember the trip forward. The more he thought about it the more he could remember.</p>

Beside him Macha appeared. "I'm sorry my siblings wear on you."

He hugged her to his side. "I just needed to rest, Macha. Why am I in here?"

"You needed to know what Sam says to the little you. You forget it later as you grow up."

He kissed her on the top of her head. "Thanks. Now take me out of here, Macha. I hate eavesdropping."

"Okay. I should tell you how you'll get your present in the future anyway."

"Present?"

\* \* \*

><p>Sam woke up the next morning to find Dean trying to teach Castiel about pancakes. He smiled as he went to find Bobby out by one of the junk cars. "Hey."</p>

He looked up from his list. "They still arguing over pancakes?"

"Pretty much. The day we got here was Dean's fifth birthday."

Bobby's eyebrows went up. "Cake and ice cream?"

"Yeah." Sam rubbed the back of his neck. "Maybe a present, but I don't know what to get him."

"We'll see what we can find."

Sam let Castiel know where they were headed and then leaned down to Dean's eye level. "I will be back in a little while. Cas is going to watch over you and we'll have a birthday party when we get back, okay?"

Dean looked scared, but he nodded. Then he grabbed Sam and hung on. Sam hugged back awkwardly.

"I promise, Dean. Just a little while."

Nodding, Dean backed off and went to grab onto Cas' trench coat.

"We will wait, Sam."

"Thanks, Cas." He got into the car with Bobby. "I feel like a total shit."

"Yep." Bobby turned them down the driveway. "Just like every parent that has to leave their kid for a while."

"Right."

\* \* \*

><p>Dean watched the ceilings with just the angel there. Just in case. Holy fire was something the church people talked about when they came to the door and rang the doorbell.</p>

"Nothing will burn while I am here, Dean."

He looked over at Cas who was holding the dragon for him while they watched \_Boundin'\_ again. "You sure?"

Cas blinked. "Yes."

Dean nodded.

"Why did you not wish to speak until now?"

He shrugged. He figured reading minds must be tiring and Cas sucked at knowing what he meant without Sam to help.

"It does not tire me to read minds." Cas let Dean climb into his lap. "You are welcome to speak or not as you see fit."

Well, that was okay then. He wondered if Cas was his guardian angel.

"That is a close a term as you will understand for quite some time."

Dean raised his eyebrows.

"Yes."

Smiling, Dean pointed at the TV.

"Very well. Although I do not understand you're desire to rewatch it for the 20th time today."

He patted Cas' arm and tried to explain in his head how it was safe to have something repeat like that. Always the same no matter how many times it played.

"May I show you a film you made me watch as an adult? You very much liked the cat-bus." Cas pointed at the TV, which was now showing a title of a movie he'd never seen. "I've given you the ability to understand Japanese so that you won't have to read subtitles."

He slid to the floor and scooted closer to the TV as the little girls explored their new house.

\* \* \*

><p>Cas would have breathed a sigh of relief as Dean lost himself in the world of <em>My Neighbor, Totoro</em>. It wasn't that he did not like the other short movie, but even with his patience for anything Dean did, there was a limit to repeating something \_that\_ often.

He listened to Sam's position with half an ear and monitored Dean's emotions as the movie progressed. Soothing the raw edges of Dean's soul wounds was easy, but he had to be sure not to do too much. There had been so much left to do from before Dean's time in Hell that Castiel had seen when he had first spoken to Dean.

Afterward there were still many little tears that Castiel had to re-heal often. Dean still wasn't forgiving himself and there was little Castiel could do to persuade him. This small Dean was torn up as well, but Castiel healed what he knew had been healed before he met Dean as an adult and the boy brightened as the little dust mote creatures started following the girl on-screen.

He could hear the others coming back, so he stretched time just enough for the movie to be ending as Sam came in the door with the cake. Castiel blinked as Dean hugged him tight before racing off to see what his brother had brought.

"Hey, Cas. You okay?" Sam looked concerned.

"I am fine, Sam." He brought the dragon toy with him as he joined the small family in the kitchen for cake and ice cream.

\* \* \*

><p>Sam watched how gleeful Dean got about the cake with their cheap unlit candles and for a moment all he wanted was their Dad alive so Sam could punch him. Dean blew on the candles just as though they were lit.</p>

Bobby hugged Dean and started pulling the candles off the cake. Cas quietly assured Dean that no one was upset they hadn't lit the candles. Dean nodded and swiped his finger through the edge of the icing and grinned up at Sam as he popped his finger into his mouth.

Sam smiled at him and dished out ice cream into bowls. Bobby added cake and they all enjoyed watching Dean enjoy it. Sam got Cas to eat a little cake and Bobby went out to get the present from the car.

"Here, Dean." Bobby sat the box down in front of Dean as Sam cleared his empty bowl.

Dean cocked his head and then looked up at them.

Cas frowned. "I understand presents to be traditional for a person's birthday."

Dean reached out and poked the box in the corner as he hitched Toothless higher into his lap.

"No. They do not require payment for it. That is why it is a present."

Dean stared at Cas while Sam held his breath.

Cas shook his head and sat his hand on the back of Dean's neck. He leaned forward and whispered something in Dean's ear. Dean broke into a smile and slipped off his chair.

He brought Toothless with him as he came closer. Sam held himself still as Dean wrapped himself around Sam's middle. Returning the hug, Sam cleared his throat as Dean pulled away to go hug Bobby.

"It isn't much, but we weren't sure what you'd like." They actually had stood in the store staring at the range of possibilities. For once Bobby had looked as lost as Sam had been feeling.

In the end they'd gone with something Sam figured he could use if Dean didn't like it. Finding a case that would hold up to being abused by a kid had been the hardest thing. A quick talk with Cas when they'd gotten back had fixed that problem.

Now he got to watch as his brother carefully undid the present's wrapping. Sam frowned. He never remembered Dean unwrapping anything like that.

Cas made a little noise in the back of his throat and pressed the undone corner back down. "You must unwrap it correctly."

Dean looked confused and poked at the box.

"It will work, but part of the enjoyment is in tearing the paper." Cas hooked his finger into one of the seams. "Like this, Dean." He tore the paper about three inches in and then motioned for Dean to continue where he'd left off.

As Dean got into the tearing, Cas stepped back to stand by Sam.

Sam leaned into Cas' shoulder. "Dean taught you that?"

Cas nodded. "He insisted that saving the paper was not the point of the wrapping."

Smiling, Sam exchanged looks with Bobby as Dean got down to the box within the bigger box. "It isn't about that at all."

Dean tilted his head and looked up at Sam. Crouching, Sam lifted the iPad out of the box and showed Dean the button to turn it on.

"I got it all set up. Castiel has made the case so you can't break the iPad. Here, see, your videos are all inside this one." He poked at the proper icon and started up \_Boundin'\_.

Dean gasped and turned it all over, probably looking for the wires. He grinned at them and held out the iPad to Sam again. Sam pushed the button that took them out of the application and gently guided Dean's hand to the screen so he could see how his fingers made the screen move.

Dean beamed at them each in turn. Then he sat the iPad down, climbed down off his chair, hugged everyone, grabbed up his new toy along with Toothless, and disappeared into the other room.

Cas settled into the vacated chair. "He finds it acceptable."

Bobby shifted his hat on his head. "Yeah, saw that." He wondered out into his junk yard.

Sam gathered up the wrapping paper and boxes, breaking them down to take up less room. He kept an eye on Dean's experimenting with turning the iPad all around, giggling every time the screen flipped to match.

Cas put the ice cream and cake away as Sam washed the dishes. When they were done they joined Dean in the living room.

Cas settled on the floor next to Dean and allowed Dean to show him everything he'd worked out about his toy so far. Dean checked Sam every little bit. Sam smiled and nodded. They spent the evening watching Dean be happy.

Toothless ended up in Sam's lap as Dean crawled into Castiel's lap so they could watch Cars. Sam didn't know how Dean could still be awake when Bobby had already crashed and Sam felt ready to drop.

He watched them watching the movie and Cas answering Dean's silent questions. Sam decided he could do this if he had too. He could raise Dean like Dean had pretty much raised him. They were almost to the final race and Dean was practically bouncing with excitement.

Sam slipped off the couch to sit on the floor beside them and Dean wiggled off Cas' lap to sit between them. Sam wrapped his arm around Dean's back along Cas' arm. Dean leaned forward as the last lap came up...

And then Sam was bowled over and smacked on the shoulder as his brother, his adult brother yelled at him for having to wait over a decade to see the end of Cars.

"Dean!" Sam struggled until Cas pulled Dean away from him and in an instant the torn up little kid clothes were replaced by Dean's normal t-shirt and jeans.

Dean sat on the floor, breathing hard, one hand clinched in Toothless and one holding Sam's forearm.

"Dean." Sam grabbed him, pulling him into a hug. Dean came and Sam could feel the toy being mashed into his back. "You're here."

"Yeah." Dean tightened his hold. "You did real good, Sammy."

Sam sniffed hard and pressed his face into Dean's shoulder. "I would have said goodbye."

Dean rubbed his back and for once didn't say a word about it being a chick-flick moment. "It would have made me worse." Dean pushed away and as soon as Sam let go Dean turned and grabbed up Cas into a hug.

"Castiel."

Cas blinked, returned the hug, blinked some more, and looked like he was going to start glowing. "You are well."

"Yeah." Dean let Cas go and picked up his iPad. He reset the movie to the moment he'd disappeared as a child and grinned at Sam as he started it going again.

"You remembered coming forward?"

"Shut up, Sammy. We're watching a movie."

Sam shook his head, but allowed Toothless to be plopped down into his lap as they watched.

\* \* \*

><p>Dean leaned against the Impala as Bobby came out to lean against it with him. "Thanks for putting us up."</p>

"Not a problem." Bobby gave him the stink eye.

Dean figured the least he could do, this once, was to actually answer any questions the others had. They had gotten him an unbreakable iPad after all. "What?"

"You weren't talking. And you were terrified of fire, the ceilings, you were just..." Bobby frowned. "You were more or less a normal kid when I met you. What happened?"

"I got mad." Dean shrugged as he settled more of his weight onto his car. "You know no one explained it to me. Mom's dead, burned on the ceiling, but I can't tell the firemen that. Dad won't talk. Sammy's crying all the time. I didn't know why we suddenly didn't have a house, were acting like Christmas didn't exist, and like my birthday wasn't happening."

Bobby made a noise at that and Dean smiled a little.

"I think Dad actually just forgot. He never forgot again after that." Dean looked at his feet and then across towards the house. "I came forward in time and went back in the middle of a movie I'd never seen." Dean grinned as he looked up at the sky. "I got mad."

\* \* \*

><p><em>In the past...</em>

Mad didn't begin to describe it. Dean screamed. And screamed. Missouri just stood back with a wailing Sammy as Dad tried to come in close. Dean's clothes were huge again, but at least Sammy was the right size. Although that didn't dawn on him for a while.

He screamed about the movie. About losing the adults who'd been so nice. About losing the angel. He yelled about his lost toys, the dragon and the iPad. He screeched about his lost books. And then it all became too much and he started to sob. He wanted his Mommy.

That's when he finally quit flailing and Daddy scooped him up and squished him. Dean just kept sobbing. He didn't want to be the big

brother right now. He wanted it all fixed. Sammy had been an adult. He was going to have to wait forever to get it all back. He clung tight to Dad as he tried to get Dean to tell him who'd had him, who'd hurt him.

Dean shook his head. "I...fine." He was starting to hiccup and snot. He hated snot. He wiped his nose on Dad's shirt just because it had to be Dad's fault he was back here before Dean got to see if Lightning McQueen had won.

"Dean." Dad was crying again. Dean patted him because that's what he always did.

Missouri came forward and let Sammy grab him, so Dean twisted to take Sammy and let Dad keep squeezing him. Missouri wiped his face with a soft wet cloth and Dean instantly felt a little better. "You're alright, son."

He nodded because he was. Dean straightened and pulled away from Dad, keeping Sammy in his arms as he did. "I'm fine." He lifted his chin as Dad wiped a hand down his own face. He stuck his hand in his pocket and found a warm ring. He clutched it. He was fine. He'd live until he could watch his movie and see his brother all huge. He just had to protect Sammy and make sure they both lived to see it.

\* \* \*

><p><em>And then there was that matter of a present...<em>

Dean jerked when the doorbell rang. Bobby appeared with a knife in hand and Sammy opened the door and stared.

Dean started to laugh. "Macha."

She waved, still the same, General Lee a little more faded than Dean had last seen. "Hello." She looked over Bobby and Sam before settling on Cas. "I was hoping you'd still do me that favor."

Behind her stood Glonn and as soon as Dean started for the door he broke away from his sister and wrapped himself around Dean's leg.

"I said I would." Dean ruffled Glonn hair. "You guys don't age?"

Macha shrugged as one Ollom appeared with a small barrel. "We like the ages we appear to be. Mom doesn't seem to mind." She cocked her head. "Mom said to ask if we could set a backup door in the old cars out back."

Dean raised his eyebrows. "She move you all out of Lawrence?"

"Technically, we've got a house in every town. Well, some times they are rural houses." She turned at pointed off across the fields across from Bobby's. "See? It's a pretty place this time. When you visit don't use the backdoor."

"I remember." Dean took the barrel from Ollom and settled it just inside the door. "Tell your Mom thanks for putting up with me."

Macha pulled Glonn off his leg. "She likes you lots." She looked up at Bobby, who was watching them warily. "The car we picked is purple now. If you want I won't put it in, but it'd come in handy later if you let us leave it."

Bobby swallowed. "A doorway to what?"

Macha smiled. "Everything." She looked at Sam and then back at Bobby. "It won't harm your wards and the nits that run around from Christian stories can't even tell it is there. They're too young."

Dean gently smacked her on the back of the head. "Be nice. One of those nits saved me from Hell."

"And for that he's welcome at Mom's table." She motioned for Dean to lean down, which he did. "You will be careful." She licked her thumb and he held still as she pressed it to his forehead. "Blessed be."

Dean stood back up and ignored his brother's gaping and Bobby's staring. He pulled on a bit of Macha's hair. "Thanks."

She grinned at him and pulled Glonn with her as she and Ollom headed down the steps. "Think about it, Robert!"

And then they were gone. Dean brushed off all the questions as he carried the barrel into the living room where Cas had watched from. Setting it down, Dean looked up at all the babble.

"Hey!" They shut up. Dean gestured at the barrel. "I'll explain them later. Present first."

Sam sat down on the floor across the barrel from Cas. "What'd you agree to do?"

Dean started to cut through the wax seal around the top of the barrel. "I said I'd look after someone until they were ready to be them again." When he broke the seal and there was a puff of sweet smelling air that came out. Dean moved the lid aside and they all peered into the barrel.

"Oh." Cas stared.

Dean carefully reached in and got the tiny body under his armpits and pulled him out. He was pale and naked. Sam made a noise, got up, and came back with clothing. Dean stretched the shirt's head hole and slipped it over the boy's head easily.

"Oh, that's what I did wrong." Sam looked sheepish.

Dean smiled and got the boy the rest of the way dressed. He was totally going to make fun of Sam later. Then he turned to Cas. "You want to hold him?"

Cas blinked and held out his hands. Dean settled the boy into Cas' arms. "He died."

Dean rubbed Cas' back. "He wasn't just Gabriel, but Loki. And from what I can tell, Ernmas' favorite adopted child."

Bobby sat down heavily on the couch. "Ernmas?"

Nodding, Dean watched the barrel fade away. "She's Macha's mom."

"Irish goddesses." Sam rubbed a hand across his mouth. "That's why you asked about their ages."

Dean picked up Toothless and tucked it into the crook of Gabriel's limp arm. "Macha found me in the past and took me to her Mom's house. The pie was awesome." He pulled his iPad to himself and flipped through the pages of applications. "Everything is for a kid, Sam."

"Dude, you were four."

Dean smirked. "Bitch."

Sam broke into a huge smile. "Jerk."

End  
file.